

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

CLAIMS

1. A system for facilitating email communications comprising:
first means for monitoring when emails are sent and/or how often the emails are sent to different email addresses and providing a signal in response thereto and
second means for selectively displaying a list of most recently used email
5 addresses and/or most frequently used email addresses based on said signal in response to user input.
2. The system of Claim 1 wherein said first means includes email address usage-tracking software in communication with email communications software.
3. The system of Claim 2 wherein said second means includes email address sorting software in communication with said email address usage-tracking software, said email address sorting software employing a data structure containing priorities associated with a predetermined number of email addresses.
4. The system of Claim 3 wherein said predetermined number of email addresses and methods for assigning priorities to said email addresses are user-configurable via a user-interface to said email address sorting software.
5. The system of Claim 4 wherein said data structure is implemented as an email address book designed to allow said email address sorting software to sort email addresses in said address book according to priority values assigned to each email based on user-input to said email address sorter and based on said signal.

6. The system of Claim 5 wherein said second means includes means for displaying a sorted drop-down list or menu of email addresses selected from said email address book and sorted according to said priority values.

7. The system of Claim 4 wherein said data structure is implemented as a priority queue.

8. The system of Claim 7 wherein said email address sorting software includes means for selectively incrementing a priority value assigned to a given email address when an email is sent to said given email address, and includes means for selectively deleting email address priority values from said priority queue to limit the size of said data structure to a predetermined maximum size.

9. A system for facilitating email communications comprising:
first means for sending an email and providing a signal in response thereto when said email is sent to a recipient associated with a predetermined email address;
second means for assigning a priority to said email address based on said signal and predetermined configuration information;
third means for sorting said email address in a list of email addresses according to said priority; and
fourth means for displaying said list of email addresses.

10. The system of Claim 9 wherein said first means includes an email software application running on a computer.

11. The system of Claim 10 wherein said second means includes a user interface in communication with a user-input device and said email software package for providing user-configurable options for specifying said configuration information to determine said priority based on said signal.

12. The system of Claim 11 wherein said user-configurable options include frequency and recency options, which when selected, assign higher priorities to more frequently used email addresses or more recently used addresses, respectively.

13. The system of Claim 11 wherein said configurable options include a list size option, a maximum value of said priority, and/or an amount by which to increment or decrement said priority of each email address in said list via said second means in response to said signal.

14. The system of Claim 13 wherein said third means includes means for sorting said list in order of decreasing priority as indicated by said priority value.

15. The system of Claim 14 wherein said third means includes a user-configurable email address sorter.

16. The system of Claim 14 wherein said fourth means includes a drop-down list or a menu in communication with said third means.

17. A method for facilitating email communications by selectively providing a list of most recently used email addresses and/or most frequently used email addresses comprising the steps of:

- 5 tracking incoming and outgoing emails and registering the time at which recipient email addresses are sent and received to yield address time information;
- registering the number of times each email address is used during a predetermined interval to yield frequency information;
- accessing user-configuration information associated with said list;
- 10 determining if a recency-based list, a frequency-based, or a combination thereof is selected by said user based on said configuration information and providing a signal in response thereto;

sorting said list of email addresses in order of recency and/or frequency and providing a sorted list in response thereto; and

selectively displaying said sorted list in response to user input.

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18. A software package for facilitating email communications from a device having an email communications package comprising:

first means for monitoring email communications to determine when an email is sent to a recipient email address and providing a first signal in response thereto;

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second means for querying a data structure containing email addresses sorted according to predetermined priority values in response to said first signal and providing a second signal in response thereto;

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third means for determining a total number of entries in said data structure and whether said recipient email address is in said data structure based on said second signal and providing a third signal in response thereto;

fourth means for removing a low-priority email address from said data structure; inserting said recipient email address in said data structure; and assigning said email address an initial priority value when said number of entries in said data structure are equal to a maximum size as indicated by said third signal;

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fifth means for inserting said email address into said data structure and assigning said recipient email address said initial priority value when said recipient email address is not in said data structure as indicated by said third signal;

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sixth means for incrementing said priority value of said recipient email address by a predetermined increment value when said recipient email address is already in said data structure as indicated by said third signal;

seventh means for sorting said data structure according to priority values associated with each email address in said data structure after said priority of said email address is altered by said fourth, fifth, or sixth means; and

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eighth means for selectively displaying contents of said data structure to a user in response to predetermined user input.

19. The software package of Claim 18 wherein said software package further includes means for selectively invoking said second through eighth means when emails are sent in parallel to plural email addresses until all of said plural email addresses are assigned priority values and either placed in said data structure or
5 removed from said data structure.

20. The software package of Claim 18 further including means for altering said increment value in response to user-input.

21. The software package of Claim 20 further including means for establishing said maximum size of said data structure based on user-input.

22. A method for facilitating email communications comprising the steps of:
monitoring when emails are sent and/or how often the emails are sent to
different email addresses and providing a signal in response thereto and
selectively displaying a list of most recently used email addresses and/or most
5 frequently used email addresses based on said signal in response to user input.